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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 001576

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DEPARTMENT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS
SECDEF FOR OSD/ISA/AP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/30/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: A/S HILL'S MEETING WITH INDONESIAN DEFENSE
MINISTER SUDARSONO

Classified By: CDA John A. Heffern, for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) Summary: EAP A/S Christopher Hill emphasized the need for continued attention to human rights and reform of Indonesia's military during his meeting with Indonesian Defense Minister Juwono Sudarsono in Jakarta on May 29. Sudarsono provided examples of officers who had been punished for human rights abuses, offered an explanation of Tommy Suharto's appearance at a recent KOPASSUS event, suggested that the emergence of civilian leadership was essential to the military's redefinition and cited low wages for soldiers as a prime concern. Sudarsono said Indonesia was cooperating with Singapore to increase security in the Malacca Strait, wanted to increase exchanges with U.S. military academies and was working with the Department of Finance to wind up military businesses. End summary.

¶2. (C) Observing that human rights remained a "heavy legacy," Hill stressed the United States wanted to "make the relationship with Indonesia work." Washington welcomed progress so far but hoped for Indonesia's continued work on this issue. TNI reform remained high on the list of U.S. priorities. The conviction of the Timika murderers of 2002 by Indonesian courts had been a welcome step. The use of human rights modules in TNI training was also positive. Although there was talk in Congress of placing new restrictions on Indonesia, this idea appeared to have little momentum.

¶3. (C) Sudarsono agreed that the central issue remained the "logistics of justice" regarding past cases of human rights abuses. Indonesia had taken action. For example, four KOPASSUS officers and three non-commissioned officers had been convicted of kidnapping civilians in 1998. Three of those had since left military service after receiving sentences of 18 to 24 months in prison. The others had returned to service but their promotions had been delayed, although two of those recently had been promoted to district commander.

¶4. (C) Sudarsono asserted that recent press reports of KOPASSUS feting Tommy Suharto were misleading. At the event on April 23 in Solo, a KOPASSUS unit had held an open shooting competition for the public in celebration of the anniversary of the force. Both of the Suharto sons had attended as private citizens, and the unit's commander, who previously had served in the protective detail for President Suharto, had bowed to them, not out of continued deference but simply in conformity with Indonesian culture.

¶5. (C) Hill said the United States was seeking to become more active in regional disaster relief activities, particularly

within the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and including command post exercises and other events. The United States was committed to bilateral cooperation in this area but also wanted to work regionally. The upcoming visit of President Bush to Singapore in September to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the U.S.-ASEAN Dialogue demonstrated Washington's commitment to ASEAN. Defense Secretary Gates was planning to participate in the Shangri-la Defense Conference in Singapore in early June.

¶16. (C) Sudarsono said Indonesia was trying to "synergize" its defense capabilities through cooperation with Singapore, particularly in the Malacca Strait. Indonesian peacekeeping forces were deployed in Lebanon under UNIFIL and a growing number of Indonesian cadets were involved in exchange programs with U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force academies. Indonesia also wanted to send two civilian staff from the its Department of Defense to the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. Bilateral cooperation had grown to 157 distinct events in 2007, up from zero four years earlier. Hill strongly encouraged Sudarsono to work closely with the new PACOM commander Admiral Keating to develop this cooperation further.

¶17. (C) Noting the recent release of the Brookings Institution study on military businesses, Sudarsono said DEPHAN was working with the Department of Finance to wind up the TNI's business operations. The TNI's long history of involvement in governance in Indonesia was gradually disappearing, but had to be accompanied by the emergence of capable civilian leadership to fill the void. Indonesia was in a process of "graduated democratization." Disaster management was a case in point of military skills which continued to prove valuable to the civilian population's welfare. Hill responded that

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experience in the United States suggested that in many cases the military remained the best first responder in disaster relief, a role which would likely grow in the future.

¶18. (C) Sudarsono said soldiers' pay was one of his biggest concerns regarding the TNI. Receiving less than \$110 per month in salary, Indonesian soldiers were among the lowest paid in the region. Low salaries increased the temptation to find income outside. With 490,000 troops, 286,000 of them in the Army, Indonesia had the region's largest force, but with a smaller proportion of officers than other countries in the region.

¶19. (U) This message was cleared by A/S Hill.
HEFFERN